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how philly is leading the glasses-free 3d revolution

SUE SPOLAN | TUESDAY, JANUARY 25, 2011



I have seen the future, and it's your buddies sitting in your living room watching the Super Bowl in glasses-free 3D. Stream TV Networks, tucked away above a law firm on the 2000 block of Chestnut Street, offers the next big thing: the auto stereoscopic screen. That's 3D without glasses, and somebody better come up with a catchier name fast. Because the prototype is there, in a top floor office. And it's a good thing.

Attorney Daniel Rink greets me at the top of the stairs at the headquarters for Stream TV, a privately held new media company founded in 2009. Rink is doing some consulting for the tech start up, helmed by Bensalem-based entrepreneur Mathu Rajan. Stream TV Networks is listed at the same address as STV Networks Inc., which is billed as a Bollywood entertainment concern. The front room of the Stream TV office resembles an empty production set with wall murals and an anchor desk fronted with colorful mosaic tile. Somewhere down the hall is a dark makeup room and kitchen. But that's not the first thing they show me.

We go right to the star attraction. A real live 3D television that does not require glasses. It's HDTV format, full of pure three dimensional pleasure. To the geeky but unschooled eye, the [eLocity](#)-branded 3D effect appears to be hewn from several layers of phased, relatively large diameter pixel screens. If you walk across the back of the room and keep your eye on the screen, at regular intervals you get a moire or lenticular effect. At the stationary viewpoint, the image is crisp. Here comes Pinocchio's nose, straight at you. Here are some intense gaming graphics. Most titles are already available in 3D, so it's just the hardware that's

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standing between you and your maker. Take that, Call of Duty: Black Ops.

Objects move smoothly through virtual 3D space. No shuddering, no pixelation. I am a believer. Along with the eLocity Android tablet offering, which we'll get to in a minute, Stream TV took the eLocity 3D TV screen to the Consumer Electronics Show (CES) two weeks ago. Zennie Abraham, a blogger at the San Francisco Chronicle, wrote, "I've seen the eLocity 3D without glasses TV, and it's real, and real impressive. Stream TV Networks' demonstration of the technology really works and if they can release it this year, eLocity will become a new household word in America."

Imagine. You are in a sports bar and the game is in 3D. You are in line at the bank and the display is in 3D. The fun never stops. Stream TV Networks' eLocity product line is wide. Aside from 3D TV sets and accompanying set top boxes that will transform two dimensionally produced shows into 3D, eLocity Android tablets are available right now. The full line will include 5-, 7- and 10-inch tablets, so far getting good reviews. Also planned: 3D digital picture frames, a 3D computer desktop and 3D digital cameras. View images on a future eLocity 3D without glasses Android tablet, widely discussed at CES. Produced in Taiwan and hovering at the \$300 price point, eLocity's 7-inch tablet is useful and compact; the soon to be released 10-inch offers a better screen, open source Android 2.3/3.0, and a lighter profile.

Poised for greatness, the company is somewhat invisible. The brand, eLocity, has a website but Stream TV networks' is [under construction](#). With just five employees in the Philadelphia headquarters and offices on the West Coast and China, the company, says Rink, can "start smaller and change on the fly." Rink says larger competitors, including Samsung, Sharp, Kodak and Philips, all of which have filed patents for autostereoscopic displays, have sunk millions of dollars into their products and cannot afford to change course easily.

Rajan, CEO of Stream TV Networks, says "our technology is a private jet compared to a moped. This product will completely revolutionize the viewing experience. Once you've gotten used to 3D you can't go back." Stream TV acquired a technology group in Fremont, Calif. that developed the concept of 3D without glasses.

Rajan, who comes from what he terms a private equity background, has many interests. His STV Networks is listed as an entertainment company. Mathu, along with his father Rajan G. Rajan, is the [patent holder](#) for a water filter manufactured by Zero Technologies Inc., which also lists Mathu's brother Raja as a partner. The [ZeroWater](#) filter bottle and pitcher are available at major retailers nationwide, including Target, J&R, Sears and Amazon. A [1998 article](#) in the Philadelphia Business Journal profiles the Rajan family's earlier water filtration company, Global Technology Solutions Inc., which was partly funded by Ben Franklin Technology Partners and housed in a West Philadelphia business incubator. Global Technology's Simply Best H2O was named winner of the 1998 Ben Franklin Emerging Business Award for most innovative product.

This chapter in Mathu Rajan's entrepreneurial history sheds light on his ability to rapidly place the eLocity line in the mass market. Many of the ZeroWater retailers are the same ones that are slated to stock the competitively priced eLocity Android tablets. And, as [Engadget wrote](#) at the time of the eLocity A7 pre-order, "Here's the tablet the economical among us have been waiting for." The Flash-enabled WiFi connected A7 line, with 1080p output and 512MB DDR2, is now in stock and shipping from Amazon, J&R, Wal-Mart, Sears and TigerDirect. The A10 line, running Android Honeycomb (3.0) is set to ship later this spring, and hints at



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Back to that Bollywood story. A quick search on STV Networks reveals that in 2008, the company pledged 30 billion rupees, or about \$650 million USD, to invest in Indian film "production, distribution and exhibition." Its game plan is vertical integration, "acquiring single screen theaters and distribution rights of films along with making a foray into the film production space in India," according to the [Business of Cinema website](#). STV Networks, with offices in Mumbai, India, "already has more than 3,000 hours of India-based content and 1,500 hours of China-based content. The company has also acquired the rights to over 100 Bollywood movies and is in the process of acquiring rights to some others too." In 2007, STV released the English language edit of Jackie Chan's The Myth. The company also released and distributed Bollywood titles Mere Hote (2009) and Shaapit (2010).

There is no word as to when the eLocity 3D TV line will go to mass production and distribution, but Stream TV Networks' product roadmap lists five models, ranging from 42 to 72 inches, all in three stunning dimensions. You do the math.

SUE SPOLAN is Innovation and Job News editor for Flying Kite. Send feedback [here](#).

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